

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 L-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /052 W

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R 240627Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9637

INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SOFIA 1035

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PROP, CGEN, BU, US

SUBJECT: UNDERGROUND EVANGELISM

1. BRITISH CONSUL HAS INFORMED EMBOFF OF CASE INVOLVING TWO BRITISH CITIZENS ARRESTED BY BULGARIAN CUSTOMS AT KALOTINA BORDER STATION NEAR YUGOSLAVIA APRIL 30 FOR IMPORTING ILLEGAL LITERATURE. CUSTOMS FOUND CONCEALED COMPARTMENT IN THEIR VEHICLE CONTAINING BULGARIAN-AND RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE BIBLES, NEW TESTAMENTS, AND CONCORDATS INTENDED FOR DELIVERY, AS THE TWO LATER ADMITTED, TO BULGARIAN "NATIONALISTS" IN PLOVDIV AND SOFIA.

2. THEY ALSO INFORMED GOB THEY HAD BEEN HIRED FOR THIS JOB BY EVANGELISM EUROPE, AN ORGANIZATION BASED IN MUNICH WHICH IS APPARENTLY AFFILIATED WITH AN ORGANIZATION CALLED UNDERGROUND EVANGELISM HEADQUARTERED IN PORTLAND, OREGON. IN ADDITION, VEHICLE THEY WERE DRIVING IS REGISTERED TO A JACK STANBACK OF PORTLAND, OREGON AND WAS BEARING OREGON LICENSE PLATES NUMBERED BJQ 274. VEHICLE WAS APPARENTLY CHEVROLET TRUCK FITTED OUT AS CARAVAN AND VALUED, ACCORDING TO BRITISH CONSUL, AT OVER US \$9,000.

3. COMMENT: BRITISH CONCERN AT PRESENT WITH ABOVE CASE IS FACT THAT BRITISH EMBASSY WAS ONLY INFORMED OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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ARRESTS MAY 10 AND ALLOWED TO SEE THEIR TWO CITIZENS ONLY ON MAY 15 AT SOFIA AIRPORT AT TIME THEIR EXPULSION FROM BULGARIA IN SPITE OF BRITISH-BULGARIAN CONSULAR AGREEMENT CALLING FOR NOTIFICATION OF ARRESTS WITHIN

THREE DAYS. THE TWO WERE EXPELLED WITHOUT TRIAL FOLLOW-
ING REPORTEDLY COMPLETE CONFESSIONS BUT VEHICLE WAS
CONFISCATED BY ADMINISTRATIVE, AS OPPOSED TO LEGAL,
ACTION TAKEN BY CUSTOMS APPARENTLY ON INSTRUCTIONS
FROM MILITIA.

4. CONSUL INFORMED EMBASSY BECAUSE, JUDGING FROM AIRPORT
CONVERSATION WITH THE TWO, HE THOUGHT THAT EVANGELISM
EUROPE MIGHT TRY TO RECLAIM VEHICLE. MORE LIKELY POSSI-
BILITY, HOWEVER, MIGHT BE REPEATED ATTEMPT BY EVANGELISM
EUROPE TO BRING SUCH LITERATURE INTO COUNTRY DESPITE
BULGARIA'S STRONG SENSITIVITIES ABOUT SUCH
MATTERS.
BATJER

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